Trutko for Cuyahoga Council

Work Smarter. No New Taxes. Provide Better Services. Grow Jobs.

What the 2026 Levies Will Cost West Shore Homeowners

Cuyahoga County Council has approved putting two separate property tax levies on the Nov 2026 ballot. The requests are from the Health and Human Service (HHS) and the Board of Developmental Disabilities (DD). Voters have the option of approving or voting against either of the levies.

Summary of 2026 Cuyahoga County Levies

Request By	What Voters Are Asked	New Mills	New Revenue ($Million/Yr)	Per $100K House	Per $350 K House
Health & Human Services	Renew the expiring 4.7-mill levy and raise it to 7.2 mills for 10 years	2.50	$111 M/yr	$87.50	$306.25
Board of Development Disabilities	Add a new 2.25-mill levy for 10 years on top of the continuing 3.9-mill levy from 2005	2.25	$100 M/yr	$78.75	$275.63
COMBINED	Both passed County Council unanimously	4.75	$211 M/yr	$166.25	$581.88

The **county's justifications** for the levies are as follows:

1. **HHS has a deficit and is at a cliff.** A $19.3M operating deficit this year leaves $3.1M in cash against a required $30.5M reserve, with a roughly $61M shortfall in 2027.
2. **HHS costs are outrunning revenue.** Out-of-home child placements added about $8M, plus new SNAP and Medicaid work-requirement staffing and post-COVID labor inflation.[5]
3. **DD has not asked since 2005.** Rollback has cut the 3.9-mill levy's real cost from about $11.38 to $6.71 a month per $100,000 while clients grew 20%.
4. **The stakes.** Officials warn of furloughs, reduced senior meals, and a first-ever Medicaid waiver waiting list.

The criticisms of the levies by council members and others are as follows:

1. **HHS overspending, not just hard times.** Councilman Michael Gallagher: "Had we not overspent our budget, we wouldn't be talking about this. So, it was a choice."
2. **The urgency is arguable.** Gallagher: "This isn't a crisis now." Councilwoman Sunny Simon: "There's no reason this has to happen now ... it can wait." DD reserves will last into 2029.
3. **The programs are not run efficiently.** The programs should have a performance audit to identify programs and improve operations before the levies were put on the ballot.
4. **No spending plan for HHS was attached.** Allocation rules for the $111M come only after the vote.

The **West Shore homeowner of a $350,000 home will pay about $582 more per year** if both levies are passed: the HHS levy will cost about $306 per year and the DD levy will cost about $276

What Levies Will Cost Average West Shore Homeowners

Community	Median Home Value	Hhs Levy Cost Per Yr	DD Levy	Total Per Year	Per Month
Bay Village	$450,000	$394	$354	$748	$62
Rocky River	$414,000	$362	$326	$688	$57
Westlake	$365,000	$319	$287	$607	$51
Fairview Park	$285,000	$249	$224	$474	$39
North Olmsted	$265,000	$232	$209	$441	$37
West Shore average	$350,000	$306	$276	$582	$48
County suburban median	$236,400	$207	$186	$393	$33

Trutko Position:

- **I do not support the HHS levy** because (1) it is an excessive (53%) increase, (2) there is no clear plan on how to spend the money, (3) it rewards slack budget and operational oversight, and (4) it is premature and may not be necessary.
- **I support the DD levy** because (1) it is the first increase in 20 years, (2) the state increase on caregiver pay is a clear driver of the need for more money, (3) the agency has a definable mission and target clientele of 15,000 persons. I would have preferred the agency to have published 2025 performance statistics prior to the funding request.

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